California Energy Commission
Public Interest Energy Research (PIER) Program
Energy Efficiency Research Office

# Research on External Power Supplies Will Save Californians Millions

Research Powers the Future PIER Buildings Energy End-use Efficiency Research Program www.energy.ca.gov/research/buildings

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# **Fact Sheet**

### Californians Save Big

If all existing stock of power supplies were upgraded to the California Energy Commission's external power supply standard, Californians will save an estimated 644 gigawatts per hour the amount of energy used by 92,000 homes in one year, or about \$90 million annually.

# **External Power Supplies Are Abundant and Wasteful**

Most office equipment and consumer electronic devices use external power supplies to convert the electricity current from alternating current (electrical socket) to direct current. Examples of devices with external power supplies include laptop computers, cordless phones, answering machines, some video game consoles, cordless tools, and computer printers and speakers. The average California home has at least 5-10 of these devices.

In 2004, there were about 145 million external power supplies in California. This number is increasing by 27.5 million units, or about 10 percent, per year. External power supplies can be incredibly inefficient – some as low as 20 percent, which means 80 percent of the energy is wasted as heat. Estimated annual energy consumption of these devices is more than 5,500 gigawatts per hour, or about 2 percent of California's annual electricity use consumption equivalent to the annual energy use of 800,000 homes in California (assuming 7,000 kilowatt-hours year, per home).



Example of typical external power supply use Source: Pacific Gas and Electric



Smaller Power Supplies are More Efficient Source: PIER Technical Brief

### PIER's Role

In 2003, PIER funded a project to improve the efficiency of internal and external power supplies. This project leveraged the research of others, including the Natural Resources Defense Council, ENERGY STAR® and foreign countries. It led to the development of a test method to determine the efficiency of external power supplies a critical step in the development of subsequent energy policies.

PIER's work led to major collaboration among federal agencies, industry partners, and others, which culminated in the adoption of energy saving standards at both federal and international levels. In 2005, the PIER test method led the Energy Commission to adopt a new external power supply standard with an effective date of January 1, 2007.

PIER's Research Led to Adoption of Federal and International Standards

In 2004, the U.S. ENERGY STAR Program adopted the Energy Commission's test method, as well as

China, Australia, Canada, Brazil and several European countries. In 2005, ENERGY STAR began labeling power supplies that meet the new requirements. Then, in 2007, the Federal Energy Independence and Security Act incorporated efficiency requirements for power supplies using PIER's test method. Assuming up to 270 million new units are sold in the United States, PIER's research has the potential to create an estimated energy savings of \$150 million per year.

## **External Power Supply - PIER Interactions**

- Initiated research to improve external power supply efficiencies
- Supported appliance standards, tested devices plotted efficiencies
- Worked with utilities, federal agencies, industry and others
- Developed test procedures for power supplies (publicly vetled)
- Ceveloped primer on "How to Improve Supplies" to show industry how to design better, more
  efficient devices

Federal and State Standards (2004-2005)

PIER

(2003-2008)

- Energy Commission: Proposed standard (publicly vetted)
- Federal: Energy Star adopts California's test procedure and begins labeling energy efficient units

Adopt Slandards (2005-2007)

- California acopts external power supply standards (effective January 1, 2007)
- Federal Energy Independence and Security Actor 2007 adopts nationwide external power supply standard

Benefits to Californians  When all existing stock of external power supplies are upgraded to the California Standard, Californians will save an estimated \$90 million in reduced energy costs, with an estimated reduction of over 200,000 tons of greenhouse gas.

For more information, please contact: California Energy Commission Public Interest Energy Research Program Phone: (916) 327-1551

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Edmund G. Brown Jr., Governor
California Energy Commission
Chair Robert B. Weisenmiller, Ph.D. | Vice Chair James D. Boyd
Executive Director: Melissa Jones

California Energy Commission Public Interest Energy Research 1516 Ninth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-5512